

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 3-16-11)

9,330

Shipments received since opening
(8,868 CH and 462 RH)

73,123

Cubic meters of waste disposed
(72,887 CH and 236 RH)

141,203

Containers disposed in the
underground
(140,743 CH and 460 RH)

TRUPACT-III quick facts:



**Made for shipping contact-handled
TRU waste**

Approximate Weight Empty:

43,600 lbs.

Overall Dimensions

Width: 8.2 feet

Height: 8.7 feet

Length: 14 feet

Road show gives a first look at TRUPACT-III



The TRUPACT-III shipping package made its final stop at the Skeen-Whitlock Building in Carlsbad, N.M. to give WIPP employees, first responders and other members of the public a chance to see new shipping package.

Above: Bobby St. John explains the TRUPACT-III package to members of the Carlsbad Fire Department.

"On the road again..."

That could've been the theme song for CBFO Institutional Affairs Manager Bill Mackie and URS Washington TRU Solutions Media Coordinator Bobby St. John during a two-week road show in February, featuring the new TRUPACT-III shipping container.

The WIPP road show provided the public an opportunity to get a firsthand look at the new shipping package that will be used to transport transuranic (TRU) waste to the WIPP site. At stops along the route, community members, first responders and media came out to ask questions about the truck, shipping package and the WIPP project.

The road show began in Arlington, Texas, on February 14 and ended at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina on February 24. Along the way, Mackie, St. John and drivers, Tommy Cash and Vince Sheats, of Visionary Solutions, one of WIPP's carrier companies, stopped at 13 locations in six states to show off the new transportation package. The show followed the SRS to WIPP shipping route.

"This is a very important part of the WIPP transportation system," said Mackie. "It is important we take the time to familiarize those individuals along the route with each transportation package we use at WIPP. The road show gives them an opportunity to have any questions or concerns answered by WIPP personnel."

The rugged TRUPACT-III shipping package will be used for large boxed waste that will not fit in the cylindrical TRUPACT-II shipping package. The first TRUPACT-III shipment is expected late this summer.

DNFSB visits WIPP



Members of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) were on site earlier this month for briefings about WIPP operations. The delegation included DNFSB Chair Dr. Peter Winokur, Vice Chair Jessie Roberson and board member Joseph Bader, along with their staff members. The DNFSB's mandate under the Atomic Energy Act is to provide safety oversight to the DOE's nuclear weapons complex.

WIPP Lab Receives Accreditation

The WIPP Laboratory has received accreditation for bioassay from the U.S. Department of Energy Laboratory Accreditation Program (DOELAP) for the fourth consecutive time.

"The WIPP lab established the baseline for all workers requiring in vitro bioassay analysis before receiving the first transuranic waste shipment in 1999, and since then the lab continues monitoring WIPP personnel," said Mansour Akbarzadeh, laboratory manager of Safety Management Solutions, a URS subsidiary that oversees the laboratory. "As of now, all reported results from bioassay analyses have shown no exposure to employees."

The lab conducts *in vitro* bioassay analysis – meaning it examines and records levels of radioactivity in the biological waste of WIPP workers. The results of this bioassay analysis of WIPP workers are published in a yearly report to the DOE, which conducts an extensive review every three years as part of the accreditation process. To receive accreditation, the laboratory must demonstrate competency in evaluating samples provided by the DOE. The lab must also undergo and pass an extensive on-site audit.

"The WIPP Lab plays a critical role in worker safety, which is paramount in DOE and WIPP operations," noted Acting CBFO Manager Ed Ziemianski. "We're pleased to congratulate the Lab both on its accreditation and its continued display of high-quality analytical capabilities."

"All data results from the extensive environmental monitoring over the past 12 years

conducted by the WIPP Lab and CEMRC have indicated that WIPP is being operated safely," said Roger Nelson, CBFO chief scientist.

The WIPP Laboratory is located within the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring & Research Center (CEMRC), a division of New Mexico State University's Institute for Energy and the Environment. URS also provides bioassay analytical services to CEMRC and other organizations in support of the WIPP project.

WIPP well represented at Waste Management Symposia



The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant was well represented at the Waste Management 2011 Symposia in Phoenix, Ariz. this month. Numerous WIPP employees presented technical papers, and a WIPP exhibit was on display with staff available to answer questions about the project. The annual conference attracts more than 2,000 people from the nuclear industry.

Above: Rose Scott and Susan Scott from WTS Strategic Communications at the Waste Management WIPP exhibit.

CBFO shows major improvement in employee satisfaction survey

Employees of the U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) indicated a significant improvement in job satisfaction in a recent survey, and a CBFO manager says team participation has been the key.

In a 2010 survey conducted by the United States Office of Personnel Management, CBFO employees noted major improvement in satisfaction with their job, supervisors and senior leaders – as compared to survey results in 2008.

CBFO Office of Business Director David Garcia said attempts to improve job satisfaction worked because all employees were involved in developing the plan put together after the 2008 survey.

"The single thing we've done better than anyone else is to get employees involved,"

Garcia said. "What we did is we formed focus groups of volunteers who addressed what we thought we needed to do."

For example, CBFO employees asked for, and received, increased supervisor training. Employees also indicated a desire for improved communication. As a solution, brown bag lunch training sessions are held throughout the year during which members of specific departments provide training about their field of expertise.

"We have also tried to focus on team building, to bring managers together into a more cohesive unit," Garcia said.

CBFO employees took the survey again during the summer of 2010, after changes were implemented, and results were published in November. All the teamwork apparently paid off.

"CBFO showed tremendous improvement," Garcia said. "We made such a notable improvement in employee satisfaction that people from (DOE) Environmental Management want to model what we did for the rest of the organization."

CBFO employees indicated an increased satisfaction level in most of the survey's 78 categories. For example, 82 percent of CBFO employees indicated they feel their supervisor provides them with opportunities to demonstrate their leadership skills – up 54 percent from 2008's survey.

Additionally, 100 percent of the CBFO employees who took the 2010 survey indicated they feel employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job. They all also said they are willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done.

"This whole improvement was possible because we created an environment that solicited and encouraged employee participation," Garcia added. "It has been a collective effort. We are doing it, and we are doing it well."

Interested in science? Check out the new WIPP science Web page

Want to learn more about the experiments being performed underground at WIPP?

A revamped version of WIPP's "Science @ WIPP" section will answer many of your questions. The section is available on WIPP's home page at <http://www.wipp.energy.gov/science/index.htm>.



Members of the EXO project work in the science lab staged in the north end of the WIPP repository.

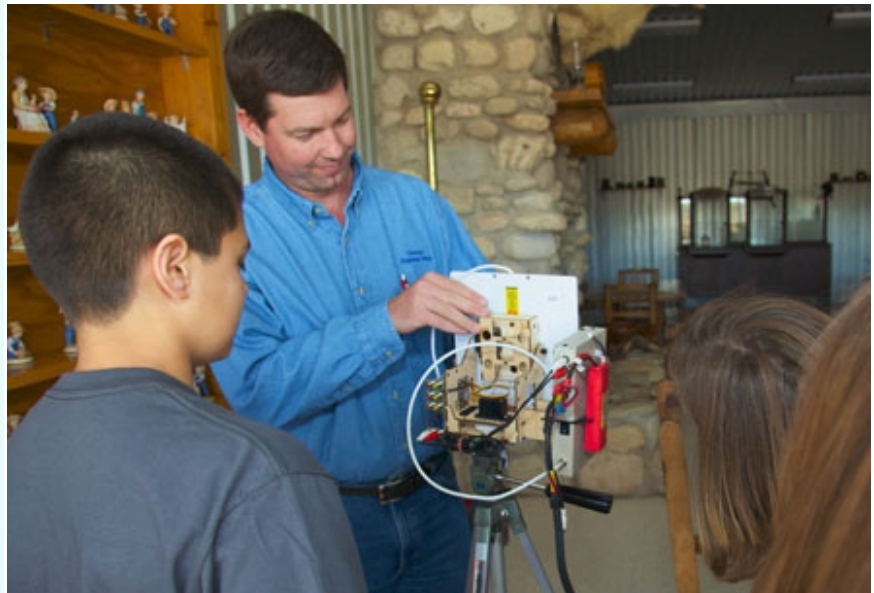
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Since the Department of Energy's Carlsbad office was elevated to a field office in 2000, numerous universities and research institutions have sought to take advantage of WIPP's strong safety culture, open door policy, and unique underground repository that offers extremely low levels of natural background radiation. Major universities such as Stanford and MIT are currently conducting experiments at WIPP.

"With some of the ongoing developments regarding the Enriched Xenon Observatory (EXO), we've really had a lot of renewed interest in WIPP's role as an underground science lab," said Roger Nelson, chief scientist of the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office. "These recent changes to the Web site provide a more updated summary of the myriad of experiments now taking place at WIPP."

Remember, WIPP is much more than just a waste repository – it's also a science lab.

Engineers Week aims to spark interest in science for area youths



Tim Goodwin demonstrates a project for kids at the Paradise Ranch School as part of this year's National Engineers Week.

National Engineers Week allows kids to see the fun side of engineering, while teaching them valuable science and math lessons. And some volunteer WIPP engineers were at the center of that for many area schools.

As in years past, during February's National Engineers Week, WIPP engineers had the opportunity to give back to the community by heading to area schools in hopes of getting kids interested in science and engineering at a young age. The WIPP volunteers who met with students demonstrated engineering functions such as designing catapults, flying remote-controlled airplanes and conducting crash analyses with clay pots.

"It's nice to be able to go out in the community and teach these kids about science and engineering," said Norbert Rempe, WIPP principal engineer and geologist. "If you can get them interested at an early age, maybe they will pursue an extremely interesting and rewarding profession."

The outreach effort extended to schools in the nearby communities of Loving and Hobbs, N.M. National Engineers Week usually takes place in February, close to the birthday of George Washington, who is considered by many to be America's first engineer.

Interested in WIPP?

If you would like to be notified when TRU TeamWorks is updated with the latest information about WIPP, send an email message to:

TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

The U.S. Department of Energy
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